

# As this academic year draws to a close, a message from ACCS President...



As we close out the 2019/20 academic year in a manner that is 'changed utterly' it might be timely to reflect on the nature of the 'terrible beauty'?

The experience of the past three months has given us cause to examine how schools operate as communities - representing all learners - and within their

communities. The ACCS regional and organisational meetings (ZOOM, TEAMS, etc.) that I have attended really gave me a great insight into the varied and supportive responses of our schools to the complex challenges, so congratulations and well done to all of you. Well done to the school leaders who encouraged the troops and marshalled the responses.

Where are the positives (Learning Outcomes) in this experience? We have learned that society needs schools and teachers. Just having got to where we are is an achievement and credit must go to the partners - DES, Teacher Unions, State Exams, Management Bodies, Parents and Students for thrashing out a solution within such a time frame. The importance for children of teachers as more than just vehicles to transmit knowledge has re-established the pastoral and vocational element that so many teachers bring to their roles.

Most schools will have expedited their teachers' ICT competence and their Digital Strategy Plan by years. If many of you and us are feeling fatigued it is hopefully the fatigue of the just - having made a super effort to sustain our students. Having spent the past six days at online interviews, it is significant how many teachers see the experience as transformational not just in terms of promoting the effective use of ICT and sustaining pupils engagement, but as to whether the terminal exams at Junior Cycle and Leaving Cert. are sustainable as effective models of assessment in a Covid-19 or non-Covid-19 world.

What have we to look forward to? Well we must feel that we can adapt again (that is what humans are good at) and after we draw breath with the completion of the Estimated Grades, we can begin to look at possible scenarios.

Amidst all the Guidelines, Memos, Press Articles etc. I read around the Covid-19 experience, the most lucid and most valuable has been by John Hattie and the link is below, but the following extracts may encourage you to check it out-

- Do not panic if our kids miss 10 or so weeks
- **If your system has school holidays, then have a holiday from schooling**
- Worry more about subjects in which parents have the least skill and about subjects and tasks where parents make kids skill and drill and lose the thrill (especially math)
- **Make sure to provide opportunities to learn what students do not know and do not engage them in busy work**
- It is not the time in class, but what we do in the time we have, that matters

- and to maintain perspective.

Best wishes to you all as we hope and pray for the best facing into the next phase of this experience.

*Mr. Paul Fiorentini, President of the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools*

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**Visible Learning Effect Sizes When Schools Are Closed: What Matters and What Does Not**

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# Student Voices

## My experience of remote learning

My name is Emma D'Arcy and I am a Transition Year student in St. Brendan's Community School Co. Offaly. On March 11th I was in Abbotstown, Co. Dublin helping out at a school blitz with the GAA Future Leaders TY Programme. On March 12th things changed very quickly. When we all heard the announcement of the school closure, we were quite shocked. I was aware of the Covid-19 situation, but I did not think things would escalate so quickly and I never would have guessed that we would not have gone back to school before the summer.

Up to the closure of schools our school would have been very good for getting us to do things digitally. Throughout the year most of my TY assignments would have been submitted by email or on Microsoft Teams so submitting things on Teams wasn't a big change. We would have been used to contacting teachers by email so that did not change, but plenty of other things definitely did change.

As with most teenagers using technology or social media would not have been difficult for me to navigate but working on my iPad all day took lots of getting used to. I found I was much more tired than a normal school day.

Initially I found the day to day running of things very strange. It was so different to what I am used

to. I found it hard that you had to do things off your own steam and there wasn't as much structure as with a school day. Having to organise your day independently took some getting used to. However, being able to contact your teacher easily helped a lot.

Microsoft teams was the main platform we used, it was easy to access assignments and I liked how each subject had its own team, work was distributed and collected through the same means which made it very manageable. I was lucky to have access to my iPad to complete my work whereas some of my friends had to share laptops with other siblings.

Some negatives of remote learning were that you were relying on yourself to get the work done in your own timeframe, to make sure that you were in contact with your teachers. It was difficult to plan our work sometimes and some days there was a lot of work distributed. It was also difficult to balance as you could have an overload of work one day and little to do the next. For junior students making sure assignments were



submitted on time was sometimes difficult, but after a while you knew which days were going to be busier than others and could plan around it.

There were definitely some positives with remote learning as it created a situation where we were in contact with our teachers more regularly if we needed them. My IT skills have improved dramatically, as I was constantly using technology to do work, connect with my teachers and friends and do research. I liked that we could do the work at our own pace and generally had lots of time to do the work that was assigned. Each week we would have a class or year group assembly on Teams where our Year Head and TY coordinator were able to check up on us to make sure we were able to access our work and that things were going well for us.

I enjoyed remote learning, but I am looking forward to getting back to school life as normal. In my opinion I think that continued use of technology in learning will be a vital part in going forward and will benefit both students and teachers in the future.

*Emma D'Arcy,  
St. Brendan's Community School, Birr*



## Remote Teaching and Learning

On Thursday the 12th of March Leo Varadkar announced that the country's schools, colleges, and childcare facilities were to close in response to Covid-19 pandemic. We were told that this would last two weeks, and many students may have seen it as more of a temporary midterm than the ongoing struggle it was.

Although schools were closed, Remote Teaching and Learning was quickly established in the efforts to keep students on track with covering their curriculum. Teachers sent emails

full of homework, projects, research, PowerPoints, challenges, and group work keeping the students focused and busy throughout the global pandemic. As well as this, they also set up Microsoft Teams/Zoom which was crucial to exam years and the overall education of the students. This allowed them to communicate with their students while also teaching and helping them to learn in this new and unfamiliar environment. It kept students in routine with school and gave them something to work for during the difficult time.

Along with the uncertainty of both Junior Cycle and Leaving Cert exam students, they were not the only students to worry about

their future. Some 5th years and 2nd years felt unprepared for the following year ahead as well as struggling to adapt to this new online schooling system. Some students



complained that they were receiving more work from teachers during the pandemic compared to what was expected of them in their normal school environment. But others also claimed that some teachers never got in contact with students at all which left them feeling ultimately neglected during this crisis.

However, knowing that both teachers and students were left in an impossible situation it should be considered that teachers and students adapted the best they could with the current predicament. It should also be said that while remote teaching and learning was a current

success, in my opinion as a student, it would not do well as a permanent solution. While online learning is due the credit of helping the students finish their school year, it does not provide students with the same opportunities as the average classroom. I know for myself; I not only miss the socialization of school but the quiet that the classroom offers away from all distractions that are found in the home. I miss the organisation of school and routine of the timetable. I personally prefer working from a book and copy than being constantly faced by a screen and appreciate the continuous effort

teachers provide to and for students to help them achieve during our normal academic year. These are small things that can make all the differences to the student's work ethic and overall attitude towards school.

That is why come September I truly hope the schools can be open and operate as normal as possible prior to the pandemic and that students and teachers alike can return to that familiar working environment and enjoy the normality that school can offer.

*Zara Keane,  
Portumna Community School*

## Elderly Ethics and Covid-19

*During the final term of remote learning, Transition Year Students from Portumna Community School address the topic of 'Elderly Ethics' during their Religious Education programme. Over the course of study students addressed issues pertaining to the care and treatment of the elderly by society in general and looked especially at the impact of Covid-19. Below are two excerpts from students work encouraging us to be both charitable and inventive during these unprecedented times.*

We all know the elderly are vulnerable and need to be protected but since the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak, their 'at risk' status has been a serious cause of alarm. This group has had to 'cocoon' for several weeks, with many confined to nursing homes. ALONE is a wonderful charity that works with the elderly, helping to identify long-term solutions to help them age at home or in the place of their choice. This charity is vital, now

more than ever. ALONE was founded in Dublin by Willie Bermingham, when he became increasingly aware of the many elderly people who died alone. During this crisis, ALONE has seen a significant increase in calls from the elderly and thus expanded its services during the pandemic. It is currently running a Covid-19 helpline for older people, seven days a week. Thankfully the charity has seen a rise in donations and there was a

remarkable €160,000 raised from the public following an appeal on RTÉ One's 'Late Late Show'. Irish people should definitely feel encouraged to support this worthy organisation, as ALONE needs funds to continue providing its great services to those who need some company or assistance during these times. Irish people can donate to [www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie).

*Clodagh Hickey,  
Portumna Community School*

## If I were the Minister for the Elderly

As Minister for the Elderly, my first major proposal would be to register the elderly for my new app that simplifies their medication routines. The app works by reminding them to take their prescribed medicine, tracking whether or not they are taking it, and notifying them when they need to update their prescriptions. Very simply this app helps them to stay on track with their medicines, easily and automatically update their prescriptions and notifies the doctor that the medicine is being taken. Once the doctor gets the notification that the patient needs their prescription updated, he simply sends a request to the chemist to prepare the prescription for collection. Once the prescription is ready in the chemist, they would send a notification directly to the

patient to notify them that their prescription is ready and needs to be collected. Then the chemist would notify the doctor that the prescription was collected. This means the elderly only have to collect their prescription, they would never run out of their medication and the doctor can keep track to make sure that the medication is being taken. This makes sure that the doctor, chemist and patient are all on the same page. It also simplifies the process and eliminates error.

Development: I would email a company like App Design, based in Galway, with a detailed description of the app I imagined and what I needed it to do and how I wanted it to look. Once I was happy with the finished product, I would attempt a trial run with a doctor's surgery, their

patients and their local chemist. If the trial goes successfully, I would begin to introduce it to my target market.

Costing: To have the app on the Apple Store is \$99 yearly. On Google Play it's a one-time fee of \$25 and on windows its around \$12 as a once off.

Marketing Plan and Promotion: I would advertise and market through social media. However, as my target market is the elderly, getting doctors and chemists on board is very important. If the trial run was a success, I would then approach the HSE.

I would also create a brochure that would be left at every chemist and doctors' surgery which shows how to download and use the app.

*Zara Keane,  
Portumna Community School*

# Creative in Covid

## Ballincollig Community School



Julia Oszczan

Fashion brief based on nature

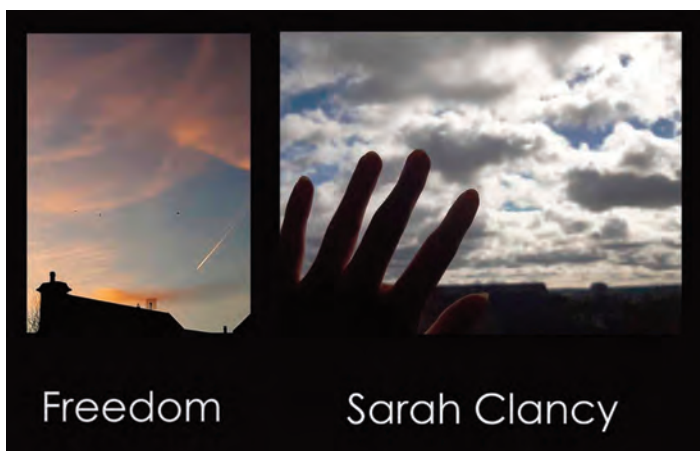


Emma Janusauskaite

Spring



CDA3 DESIGN  
Nina Drummond



Freedom

Sarah Clancy

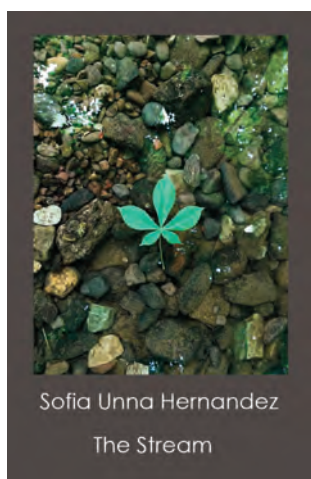


Ava Daly Marah

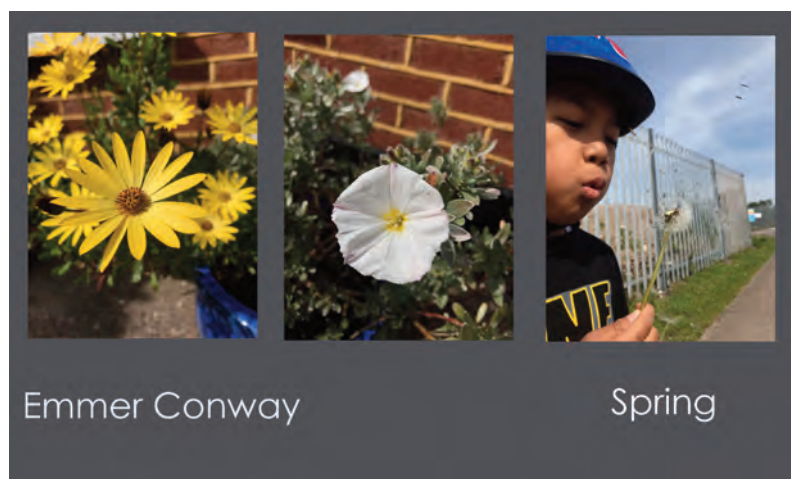
Boredom



Lucia Gawronska  
Stopped Clock



Sofia Unna Hernandez  
The Stream



Emmer Conway

Spring

# Royal & Prior Comprehensive School

Wonderful creativity and fabulous display of artwork  
by Adam McCrabbe, Shauna Keating, Katelyn Hamilton & James Johnston.



# Schools Managing and Leading in Pandemic Times – Navigating Covid-19

## Old Bawn's Remote Journey Back to Community

So, one Thursday afternoon everything changed, changed utterly. The building was to be emptied and closed but the school was to remain open. No physical lessons, classrooms or face to face engagement, notwithstanding the fact that we were at the business end of the school year. At first, we heard it was for two weeks, but we all guessed it would probably be until after Easter. As we watched the unfolding stories of cancellation; The Olympics, The Euros, The Ploughing, slowly the staples and the sacred cows fell too, the orals, the practicals, the Junior Cycle exams, the rest of the school year and then finally the big one: the Leaving.

Not even the postman in Donegal predicted this, so the diversity of experience and readiness among schools and staff for this unforeseen new normal was as varied as the cultures, learning needs, opinions and starting points of the students and families in our schools. However, isn't differentiation our mantra? Isn't education all about overcoming barriers and bridging gaps? Don't we all believe that those we work with are without exception capable of learning and growth? As teachers and leaders,

did we worry and stress about colleagues and other schools picking it up and doing it better than us? Of Course! As a centre of Learning and Teaching and as professionals, have we developed and reflected and bonded and matured and overcome? You bet! Distance has become the mother of invention. The initial fear that we all experienced has not gone away. Maybe though, it is slowly dawning on us all locally and nationally that because there is so much uncertainty and there's no definitive play book out there, that we do have the freedom to try new things. The only constant and certainty is that we care deeply about our work and school communities. We have gone back to basics. We have embarked on a search for the soul of what we do, why we do it and how to do it better!

The above relates to every school that earnestly embraced the challenge and endeavoured to stand at their own front line. It would be inaccurate to suggest our digital journey began on the 13th of March 2020. But like everyone else, all that we had done up until that date was never more important. As leaders we're all probably immensely proud of what our teams and staff and

students and parents have done and achieved in the past three months. So what have we noticed in our school?

- The rare online synchronous class has become common, frequent and numerous. Teachers are talking about teams and differentiated digital strategies, forms and flipgrids, forums and feedback.
- The first video meeting of the leadership team has become the at least twice daily online face to face that is second nature.
- The trepidation of calling the first whole staff meeting has been replaced with a desire to share, design and deliver meaningful multimedia, information and online collaboration.
- Online subject meetings are second nature.
- A daily timetabled staff online coffee break is a necessity rather than a novelty.
- An online timetable for students works!
- The Care Team hold their meetings at the same time but from their own homes and discuss innovative ways of how to address the care needs of the school community.
- The SEN Teachers and Team have included the remote nature of learning into their IEPs.
- APIs meet to discuss school strategy, but now in cyberspace.
- The Board oversees and governs through a screen!
- Year teams, and discussions and assemblies are not only possible online but worthwhile and productive.
- The Student Voice has become louder and closer as they operate through a medium that is natural and native to them.
- Competitions and extracurricular activities and awards through digital media are being explored and delivered and enhance the community spirit of the whole school.
- Our Graduation will be entirely online but both teacher and student alike are genuinely excited about it.



### Teacher Voice

- Teachers were surveyed and a phonecall was made to every staff member in the first two weeks.
- Teachers asked for support with the work load and demands from students in addition to coping with home life so a Blended Learning approach with a new Timetable was adapted with a mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning.
- Through daily online CPD, teachers up-skilled with video demos and infographics.

### Student Voice

- Meetings hosted by the Student Council.

READ  
MORE >

Old Bawn Community School  
Digital Strategy In-School CPD 2019-2020

- 2nd Year Student voice meeting held.
- Students compiled a list of What Works which was delivered at a whole staff meeting to help inform teachers.

### Teacher Wellbeing

- Our Friday Treat took a competitive turn with the introduction of weekly Quizzes.
- We had our morning coffee break every day with minimal shop talk.
- Staff received Positivity Post and a chocolate Treat for Easter.

### Student Wellbeing

- OBCS's Fittest Family organised by

the PE Department.

- Hearts for our Heroes organised by the Art Department.
- Student Support making daily phone calls and check ins.
- Positivity Post sent to over 200 students.
- Year Group Teams for teacher free chat and queries to be addressed.

What does the future hold? Who knows, but when we do get back to school, and again like everyone else we can't wait; all that we've done while away will stand to us. We'll be better for it. We will have so many more skills and a new found appreciation for so much. A terrible beauty is born.

*Kevin Shortall & Sarah Gibbons,  
Deputy Principals*

## Holy Family Community School – Wellbeing Matters

### The HFCS Wellbeing Podcast

The HFCS Wellbeing Podcast is an initiative of Holy Family Community School in Dublin. Our school closed on March 12th, 2020. For the first five weeks of our collective journey through lock-down together we explored different aspects of wellbeing via our HFCS Wellbeing Newsletter. In fact, our first newsletter was launched on March 16th. There was a total of five digital print editions including a special Easter holidays 14-Day Wellbeing Challenge. The theme for each week was based on one or more of the six wellbeing indicators devised by the NCCA: active, aware, connected, responsible, respected and resilient. Thirty-five contributors from our student body, our teaching staff, and friends of our school made the newsletter something to look forward to each week. The Wellbeing Newsletter has been acknowledged and replicated by colleagues in other schools and Youth Reach organisations in Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford.

During the Easter holidays, I reflected on whether the Newsletter was the most effective manner to engage students in Wellbeing education. I concluded that creating a podcast was a more effective way of engaging students, and the sound of the voices of each

contributor would provide a more enjoyable and intimate experience for the listener. Since April 29th the podcast has been released each Wednesday to coincide with when our students would have had their Wellbeing Tutor Time class. The podcast follows the same design as the Newsletter in that each episode is themed around an indicator of wellbeing and last approximately 50 minutes. Our podcast contributors have included students, staff and friends of our school community all of whom record their contributions in the safety of their own homes. The podcast also contains a special feature called "Letters from the Frontline" in which former students of HFCS who now work in health-care or the emergency services contribute stories about the reality of the struggles of their work and also inspirational stories of joy and hope. Each episode is written and presented by our Wellbeing Coordinator Pádraig Meredith.

Since May 7th, the HFCS Wellbeing Podcast has been available on Apple Podcasts, thus, enabled us to share our podcast throughout the world. On May 7th, we also received a letter from the Office of President Michael D. Higgins, which stated "*The President is aware of the creative initiatives that schools are undertaking during*

*this time of national solidarity. He finds it very encouraging to see how teachers and coordinators like yourself are engaging with students as we tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. It is very important that young people stay engaged in their communities, and to look after their physical and mental health in these special circumstances through which we are living.*" These have been unprecedented times of uncertainty, fear and isolation for many people in our society, including our students. The HFCS Wellbeing podcast has brought our community together. Whilst we are not physically in the same building learning together, the podcast brings the voices of our students and teachers inside the homes of all the members of our community. While we are apart, the podcast allows us to learn and to listen from the experiences of each other in a unique way.

*Pádraig Meredith,  
Wellbeing Coordinator*

LISTEN >

Apple Podcast

LISTEN >

Podbean

The HFCS Wellbeing  
Podcast

## “Beating the Bug” in Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine

School closure and March 2020 saw our school connecting with the students by organising online assemblies on Microsoft Teams using the Schoolwise Teams App. This platform facilitates the organisation of an online meeting very simply in minutes while also ensuring effective security controls with no chance of anyone gate-crashing our Assemblies.

We used the platform to facilitate opportunities with the Leaving Cert Class including the Leaving Cert Applied Group to avail of talks given by our adolescence counsellor on “Coping With the stresses of being a Leaving Cert in Covid-19”. These weekly talks were very well attended and the feedback from students was excellent.

We used the aforementioned *Schoolwise* to upload homework and materials to students as well as

sharing links, videos, pdfs etc. The Platform is used by staff for planning both at Subject Dept level and on an individual basis. These plans can be shared with students in various stages. The platform facilitates students returning work, communicating with the teachers and their peers and it integrates both Microsoft 365 and our school Administration System, *Cloudschool*. It has certainly made life a lot easier for everyone during this time of forced closure.

One of the real positives of this time was to see our Teaching Staff excel in the use of ICT. We have teachers who screen casted, voiced over PowerPoints, developed online tests using Google forms, created YouTube videos etc. Some of these teachers were not the technologically advanced teachers

but they rose to the challenge and excelled in this new environment.

There were the frustrations too but I feel as a staff, Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine adapted to the needs of our students in what were very strange times. One must remember the closing of schools was a sudden decision and we didn't have time to plan for it but the lessons we have learned in the past few months will stand to us going forward. The professional development of all staff is one of the biggest positives from this period of time. Let us hope that as we head into the summer holidays that everyone will get a well-deserved break and a chance to recharge the drained batteries.

*Dermot Healy*  
School Principal,  
Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine

## Donahies Community School



Donahies Community School Management Meeting on ZOOM.



Donahies Community School organising Food Hampers during School Closure.



## Gorey Community School

### Planning was essential in preparing for shutdown

While we all paid careful attention to the growing numbers of Covid-19 cases in Ireland in recent months, I was also keeping a close eye on the Office 365 analytics figures for my school – Gorey CS. These too were growing exponentially, rising to a high by mid-April. None of us envisaged the sudden announcement that schools were to close on March 12th forcing staff and students to adapt quickly. For many it meant upskilling in a very short space of time. Parents and students were naturally concerned at how they could access the materials prepared for them, with access to technology being a problem for a significant number. Parents were asked to email the school if their son/daughter had problems logging onto their Office365 accounts and these were reset immediately if necessary. Communication was key. Helpful advice was posted on the school website/app, the Principal regularly texted updates to parents, Guidance counsellors, Year Head Teams and the School Chaplain contacted students who found it difficult to engage remotely, while the SEN Team worked closely with their students. Appropriate digital materials to promote staff and student wellbeing were also distributed.

With a student population of approx. 1,600, it was fortunate that Gorey CS had implemented the Digital Learning Framework (DLF), having been selected as one of the 40 pilot schools back in 2017. With the support of Siobhan O’Sullivan, our PDST advisor, we worked on a digital plan and our acceptable use policy for ICT. Staff were quick to buy into the DLF as it was closely aligned to our SSE targets and the benefits of ICT were obvious to many. We formed a Digital Leaders Team (15 members of staff across a range of subjects) and sought to address some of the digital challenges we faced. We prioritised staff training, introduced Digital Media classes for all First Years, and adopted Microsoft Teams as our communication platform. The DLF has been transformative. Teachers and SNAs communicate, share resources and collaborate seamlessly, ensuring efficiency and greater productivity. Each year staff are surveyed on how we spend our ICT budget, with subject departments making requests for financial support for technology to enhance teaching and learning.

Planning for the return to school in September has taken on greater importance as a result of Covid-19. It is assumed that there will be an

element of ‘blended learning’ necessary, in the event that students cannot return to school in the normal way. We have already begun to plan for this, seeking to learn from our experience since mid-March. The Digital Leaders met online to discuss our ICT priorities, which include subject planning, assessment, monitoring engagement, further training and implementing best practice for ‘remote learning’. We will meet again regularly in July and August to build resources which school management and staff can use if necessary.

ICT is embedded in our school system now. Recent months have seen a massive leap forward. Of course, there have been problems and challenges, but we are in a better place now to address these. In September, we need to be prepared, by not only looking at how we use technology, but also at how we use it in the most effective way, to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning. This cannot be done in isolation, and while each school context is unique, there are certain steps that can be taken to ensure our transition to the next school year is made easier.

*Brendan O’Sullivan,  
ICT Coordinator*

## Coláiste Chiaráin

### 1st Year

### Virtual Tour 2020

Under normal circumstances our incoming 1st year cohort would pay a visit to the school and have a tour of the building and a look into some classrooms.

WATCH >

[Coláiste Chiaráin's virtual video tour for incoming 1st Years](#)



# Portumna Community School

**The school corridors may have been empty for several months yet Portumna Community School took a novel approach in helping their students mind their mental wellbeing during the lockdown!**

Interview with Chaplain Bríd Dunne discussing PCS students involvement in the 'Tackle Your Feelings' programme.

On March 13, schools and colleges across the country closed their doors. They remain shut until after the summer holidays, yet many adapted impressively to the new conditions. While the roles of parents, students and teachers may have shifted for a period, it is anticipated that normal service will resume in September.

Unfortunately, the school closures also impacted on the Tackle Your Feelings Schools programme which was due to commence in the spring. Aimed at Transition Year students, the pilot initiative is the first of its kind to be introduced into schools by any organisation. A classroom-based course, students are introduced to a range of resources and tasks designed to help them develop their understanding of mental health and wellbeing, with players from around the country sharing their own tips and advice.

After several months developing the syllabus, the Tackle Your Feelings team enlisted the help of 16 schools across Ireland before Covid-19 intervened. With plans afoot to regularly link in with a designated champion in each school, the hope was that by 2021 the programme could be rolled out nationwide. It was therefore to our great delight when Bríd Dunne, Chaplain at Portumna Community School, informed us that her students would be advancing with the programme.

"I'm here to promote the social, emotional, moral and spiritual wellbeing of students no matter where I am," Ms Bríd Dunne tells us over a call to review the syllabus. "It's being integrated into the junior cycle so I'm happy to say that 'wellbeing' is more within the vernacular of the classroom these days, but it was the heart of the Chaplain's role well before it was rolled out with JC reform.

"I'm always looking at initiatives that are contemporary, that can

reach students and support them in their development as human beings. Being Chaplain is a faith-based role but ultimately it's about the care of the child in front of you and the pastoral care of the school community. We were always aware it was a pilot programme and we have fed back on different things to the team, but overall Tackle Your Feelings absolutely supported and developed our aims."

Speaking as she brings an extraordinary year to a close, Ms Dunne outlines how she was cognisant of the peculiar circumstances enveloping her students from the outset of the shutdown. Having encountered Tackle Your Feelings some time ago, she was intrigued when the schools version of the initiative was released and duly sought it out. Looking back, it was a timely move.

"Given the international crisis, never before did it seem so important to continue. There wasn't a question mark. It made us more determined to carry it out if anything. I wanted to make sure we were doing something to support young people who may have a lot more free-time or overthinking time, and tried to focus that energy in a positive direction so that they understand their feelings and themselves both for now and into the future.

"Anxieties may have been more heightened for Leaving Cert students, but it was intense for everyone. Through Tackle Your Feelings we wanted to set their expectations of themselves and of their families, especially in circumstances where they're not used to spending so much time together. Usually they'll be with their teacher most of the day!"



Indeed, Ms Dunne describes the student-teacher relationship as being one of the cornerstones of a young person's development. Although she repeatedly stresses that the autonomy of the teacher should never be compromised, her hand was forced as no return seemed likely. Keen to guide them through the app, Ms Dunne adapted the class and brought TYF into her students' homes twice weekly with Microsoft Teams.

"The biggest conflict for me was actually that the students live digitally these days. Two-year-olds know the passwords to their parents iPhones, while those a little older consume everything from TikTok to Instagram! There's an idealism attached to those social media platforms and it can be difficult to understand that it's a narration, not life itself.

"Every app has its use and they are great in their own right. Many people would say that apps made their lockdown experience much easier. However, I also believe that if you're consuming digitally all the time it can affect your ability to live in the real world. I was relieved when, although digitally based, TYF was rooted in normality and in real time. Learnings came through the student's own lived experience.

"As it happened, everyone was having to engage digitally anyway. Obviously, it then becomes a competition for their attention, yet when we asked them for their thoughts it was comforting to know how much they appreciated TYF and

how it had helped them in getting through a difficult few weeks.

“They’re genuine kids. They’re the kind who’ll tell you if they didn’t get anything out of it, so I do think it had a positive impact. A few didn’t complete it – some had farming to do, others had little brothers and sisters to look after, but in general nobody said it was a waste of time. In fact a few of them said the timing couldn’t have been better!”

In a recent study carried out by TYF consultant psychologist Dr Jennifer McMahon, it was found that young people will look to their heroes to help regulate their

emotions and to model the type of behaviour they aspire to. In the context of Covid-19, Dr McMahon believed that seeing rugby players taking their wellbeing seriously translated into young people taking it seriously for themselves, Ms Dunne agrees.

“Seeing people at the top of their sport discuss their wellbeing was a key point of difference, especially in the current climate. In particular, I found that it helped to address wellbeing issues with the lads because it was based in a sporting narrative. Whether it’s GAA or rugby, most lessons are about the team and

it may be difficult to open up as an individual. TYF offered students the chance to continue in the ethos of sport, although the fixtures were cancelled.

“The fact that Tackle Your Feelings was coached and supported by a rugby cohort made it cooler and more accessible. Ultimately, you’re competing for a young person’s attention. If they have to decide between a wellbeing app or TikTok you know what they’ll choose, but TYF can give food for thought. A little bit more work and it can really make a real difference.”

Some learnings for us all!

## Ashbourne Community School Remote Learning Experience

I had been using Microsoft One Note on Microsoft 365 with my students for some time but mainly just to post up work and notes which students could access if they were away on extracurricular activities or out sick. Since March 12th I asked students to post work to the “homework tab” which allowed me to correct their work and give feedback using the screen pen much in the same way as you would correct a student copy. I found that students engaged more with this feedback as opposed to getting an emailed response which could be lost among the myriad of emails received.

A new departure for myself and

for many teachers was engaging with a live online remote class. I used the Zoom app. My initial experience of it was that students found it more difficult to engage with it than the teachers. They were very quiet! I found myself doing all the talking and getting little or no response from the students other than “yes” or “no”.

Following a CPD session on remote learning I was introduced to “Break Out Rooms” which is a function on Zoom which allowed me to break the class up into smaller groups and which I could assign work to, visit, interact with and get feedback from at many stages throughout the session.

This facility moved the online class experience from a teacher led class to a more student centred, activity-based experience. It facilitated active learning, group work and collaboration among the students. It transformed the live class from a boring lecture to a student-centred activity-based learning experience.

It will never replace the classroom but “Break out Rooms” definitely helped teacher and students experience a more “real” online classroom.

*Pat O’Shea,  
Business and Economics Teacher*

# Wave of Change – Bishopstown Community School response to Lockdown Measures

“The Only constant in life is change” *Heraclitus, Greek Philosopher*



No matter the change we experience, it is how we embrace or adapt to that change or disruption that will have the greater impact on our lives.

On March 12th schools across the country were catapulted into a sea of change as they ventured a completely new space for education in Ireland. Bishopstown Community School a coeducational in Cork City are one cohort who have navigated their journey and are now in the midst of preparations for the voyage that September will bring.

As educators, schools were tasked with holding the norm in these abnormal times. Fortunately, we were well placed. The school's Digital Learning Team partnered with Wriggle had recently equipped all staff with Microsoft Surface Pro's. Teachers had begun to incorporate more technology and apps into their daily teaching lives. When we moved to online teaching, we were still familiarising ourselves with the technology but webinars and training videos made available by Wriggle kept us on track.

Even with this new technology the greatest asset any organisation has is the people and it was the response of staff and students

which has made this move so successful. It was daunting at times as we were all overwhelmed with information, getting to grips overnight with multiple tech-based teaching tools and wondering how we would continue to teach and learn efficiently while remote. Our collaborative approach to teaching meant we had great support from each other. Places on the online tutorials and webinars were snapped up, people made themselves available to help colleagues, we shared our experiences, resources and offered advice or assistance to each other. Students were also moving to a new realm; they were on a steep learning curve too. Moving from the structures, supervision and routine offered by daily school life set a new challenge. We were all on a journey of discovery as we tried, trialled and acquired new skills.

It was not all smooth sailing as various problems were encountered along the way. We were not all starting from the same point on this journey. The school responded to those needs, some issues were an easy fix and the school did their best to address the digital divide which existed. The school was able

to loan additional equipment to students, and a group of tech savvy teachers took on the role of tech support for students, contacting any student encountering difficulties and helping them to get online.

There were distractions that don't exist in school. Our Care Team continued our check and connect routines, SNA's and Resource teachers provided additional support. Mary Sheahan, Senior Cycle Year Head and Maths Teacher mentions that we did our best to alleviate these issues but no online platform could compensate for the lack of personal approach which happens in the classroom. Student feedback illustrates that they too found this to be difficult, also missing friends and chat in the class, but, were quick to suggest that the lack of travel commute and the fact they could drink a cuppa while in maths class were benefits. A video message was created from all staff to the students, just to let them know we missed seeing them face to face.

Taking all of these factors into account teachers went about delivering the curriculum using tried and tested reliable methods combined with creative and

innovative approaches. Music Students built instruments from household items, a whistle sculpted from a carrot, tissue box guitar and rubber glove bagpipes were amongst the finished products. They created a graphic score titled "Lockdown" from the sounds of the lockdown. Science students logged the changing phases of the moon with Oreo cookies and grew their own crystals. Poetry and art competitions were held, creative writing courses completed, baked goods devoured, accelerated reader programs continued, library books dispatched, quizzes, surveys and videos were all produced. The wealth of work completed by both students and staff was phenomenal.

Conscious of too much screen-time our P.E department and TY students set about getting people on the move. A Step Challenge recorded our daily steps for one month, messages of encouragement and praise were sent to each participant. Targets were surpassed and smashed as competition rose. An #inthistogether ball skill video threw down the gauntlet to all, some (the students) rose to the challenge more deftly than others (the teachers) but all had fun in creating the video which incorporated well known sports stars displaying skills that some of us can only aspire to.

Student council meetings moved online and new projects like The Student Survival Guide were set in motion.

Online assemblies for each year group provided a space for students to voice their concerns, share their thoughts and receive guidance from trusted sources offering stability as each new announcement was made. As debate about exams gained traction it caused added pressure, disquiet and unrest for students as they sat in limbo, announcements for August examinations appeased, giving them a definitive timeline. Students showed a great maturity in their capacity to accept these announcements and changes. At the cancellation of the Leaving Certificate examinations again our school leaders played an integral role for students in offering advice and stability during the chaos of

uncertainty. The tides had shifted for these students with everything coming to an abrupt ending they responded with courtesy and respect and are to be commended for the honourable manner in which they reacted to this process.

We were also cognisant that this time of year in the school calendar provides many rites of passage. We moved our graduation ceremony, end of year celebrations and incoming first year inductions to the online forum.

Our Graduating class received an official invite by mail along with the Graduation Book, messages from their teachers, reflections and treats. Parents, students and staff all gathered online where video messages were shared from our student council and music society students sang beautifully while live on the call. A farewell speech by our principal, followed by the exceptional speech made by John Cottrell, LC student. He displayed the thoughtfulness and kindness which epitomised this group as they progressed through their schooling. Mentioning each and every member of staff, he addressed the memorable moments for him and his fellow students. John had poignantly and aptly chosen a quote from Robert Frost "The Tuft of Flowers" from his English course to sum up their last term of education in our school.

*'Men work together.' I told him from the heart,  
'Whether they work together or apart.'*

True to form the students surprised us with a video message they had created themselves as a thank you to us. It was a historical occasion and brought a positive closure to their schooling.

There was one last piece of business to attend to, Our annual student/teacher basketball game. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the students could not field a team and were deemed to have forfeited the title. They weren't going to let that happen and amid protests from both sides a resolution is yet to be decided.

Our attention shifted to the new

students; we welcomed the incoming group. Ms Helena Coughlan, First Year Head and SEN Co Ordinator says, "We are very aware of the plight of these students in a similar situation to our final year group, they were missing the milestones of sixth class and the physical induction of coming to visit the new school, meeting some of their new teachers and classmates, all which help with the transition to second level". We could offer some elements of our typical induction in an online forum. Students were set up with school emails, for many it was their first experience of the Teams platform, they were introduced to staff members and some of the fear or pressure of what September will bring was eased. A parent sent her thanks for making her son feel welcome and relaxed.

These thoughts were echoed by our Parents Association who commended the school on our approach and immediate response to our changing world. "Lockdown hasn't been something they could have anticipated or trained for and yet their response was above and beyond what might be expected. Teachers were readily available for parents and students queries or concerns. The swift response facilitated learning and the caring attitude shown towards students throughout these unprecedented times epitomises the spirit of BCS."

The school year was rounded off with what had become our weekly online staff meeting, we each enjoyed a cuppa with our specially delivered renowned Cork chocolate bar from O Connails chocolatiers.

As we reflect on this time and await guidance on next term, we recognise our school community is stronger as a result of these changes. We were united in our approach, we have come to further appreciate all that a school offers, we have done our best for our students and maintained our high standards. It has been an intense ride but we are heading for calmer waters for now.

*Deirdre O'Sullivan,  
PR Liaison*

# Saying Goodbye to our Sixth Years

## Pobalscoil Chloich Cheannfhaola

Teachers create '80s style TikTok for class of 2020



WATCH >

## Pobalscoil Neasáin

@PSNeasain · May 21

A huge thanks to past PSNer @NickyByrne for sending this message to our LC 2020 class to celebrate their end of their time in PSN. We will have our grad time!

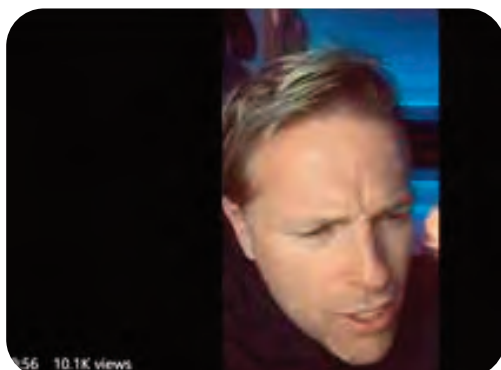
#LeavingCert2020

#Graduation2020 #nickybyrne

#Westlife @westlifemusic

#dea-chroí

WATCH >

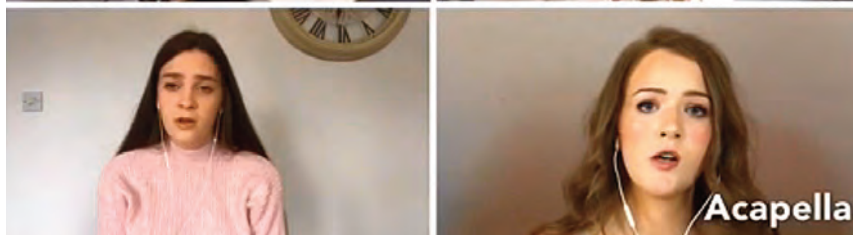
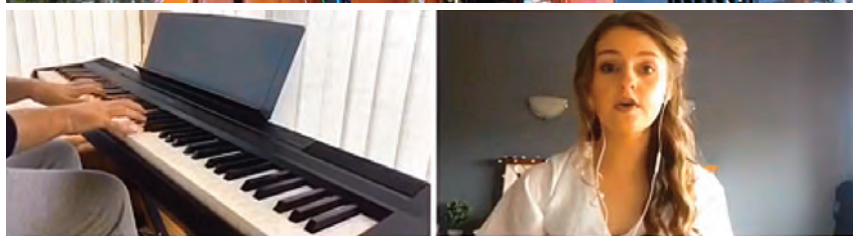


## Coláiste Cholmcille, Ballyshannon Leaving Cert 2020 Graduation



WATCH >

## Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara Ardteist 2020 Video and ArtWork



Ionnaigh Ní Allmhuráin, Caoimhe Ní Fhlatharta agus Áine de Búrca ag canadh "Beidh tu liomsa choiche" bunaithe ar an amhrán "The Cloud's Veil" le Liam Lawton. Tioncalan muinteoir ceoil Daithí Ó Cinneide ar an bpianó. Ta obair Ealaíne déanta ag an muinteoir Ealaíne Aoife Dowd. Beidh na pótraidí seo crochta sa scoil mar aitheantas ar an rang stairiúil seo. Míle buíochas as an obair a chur na scolairí agus na muinteoirí Daithí agus Aoife isteach sa ceillúradh álainn seo.

WATCH >

## Portmarnock Community School Bids Farewell to the Leaving Cert Class of 2020

...Today, 18th May 2020, I'm so aware of the world awakening around us again, offering hope for a new beginning. My final thoughts draw on the words of Brendan Kennelly, which seem particularly apt:

*Begin again to the summoning birds  
To the sight of light at the window  
Begin to the roar of the morning traffic  
Though we live in a world that dreams of ending  
That always seems about to give in  
Something that will not acknowledge conclusion  
Insists that we forever begin*

Until we meet again, embrace the new beginning.  
I bid you farewell and God's speed.

Eithne Deeney,  
Principal



...We would like to leave you with a thought from Emily Dickinson:

*Hope is the thing with feathers -  
That perches in the soul -  
And sings the tune without the words -  
And never stops - at all*

Go dtí go gcasfar ar a chéile arís  
muid go dté sibh slán.

Ms. Órla O'Toole and  
Ms. Caroline Dixon, Year Heads,  
say farewell to the LC Class 2020

## Kinsale Community School

@KinsaleComSch · Jun 12

Today we got to see some of our Leaving Certs once again as they came to collect their Year Book. It was great to see their smiling faces & hear the noise on our quiet corridors. Thanks to Ms Dunne & the TY team for compiling this book of memories



@KinsaleComSch

Well done to TY student Sarah Fitzgerald on this outstanding achievement. Everyone @KinsaleComSch is very proud of you.



@KinsaleComSch

Frontline staff  
UHK  
[@hospital\\_kerry](#)  
wearing face visors produced by Kinsale Community School students & staff to support [#FrontLineHeroes](#) in the fight against [#Covid-19](#)  
[#FlattenTheCurve](#) [#KCS4Life](#)



Sarah FitzGerald from Kinsale, the overall winner of the creative writing competition for Wicklow's VIRTUAL Cruinniú na nÓg.

## St Kilian's 'Send-Off' was an Online Success



THE 6th Year students of St Kilian's Community School, and indeed all schools, have endured many disappointments over the past few months, and it has been an extremely stressful and challenging time for them. The highlight of every school year at St Kilian's is the 6th Year Graduation but, because of the social distancing restrictions that are in place for the foreseeable future, this event is on hold for the moment.

St Kilian's was anxious to mark May 21, that date for which the graduation had been scheduled. A '6th Year Send-Off' was organised by the Class Tutors, Ms Tracey Brophy, Mr Enda Forde, Mr Brian Duggan and Ms Sinéad Murray working alongside the School Principal, Mr John Murphy. Meticulous planning went into the event, which was held online at 5pm. In the hours prior to the 'Send-Off', a team of twelve staff members made door-to-door deliveries with gift bags for all of the students. Each bag contained a commemorative poster, a customised card, some fancy chocolates and a red rose wrapped in the school colours, wine and green. Students were dressed in their school uniforms for one last day and posed for photos, with their families, at their front doors.

The online event was a tremendous success and was attended by all of the students and their families, along with

all of the school's teaching and non-teaching staff. Ms Brophy acted as MC and sections included the last roll calls with each student's 1st and 6th Year photos featured, a message from their Year Head, Ms Maeve Taaffe, video messages from the staff, a class song and a slideshow of lots of memories from down through the years.

The students were represented by the Head Girl and Boy, Kayleigh Howick and Oscar Yeoh, and the Deputies, Mya-Kate Mullen and Dylan O'Toole who introduced the Fun Awards. Mr Murphy brought proceedings to a close, wishing everyone well on behalf of the whole school community.

Speaking later, Mr Murphy said that the event had exceeded his greatest expectations and that the feedback from everyone had been unbelievable and the school's Facebook page had never had more visits. He was very appreciative of everyone's efforts in making the event a success, and was delighted that the school played

some small part in lifting the mood, not only of the students and their families, but of the wider community. It had been a poignant and emotional occasion that had united the greater school community in celebrating a very special group of students. Mr Murphy said that he was extremely proud to be the Principal of a school that could organise such a unique and meaningful event, in such difficult circumstances. Positive relationships and always putting the child first are the hallmarks of the school, and this was never more evident than on 21st May.

*Extract from Bray People, Newspaper Article, May 27, 2020*



Michael Gillman and his family.



Lauren Monahan with her parents Wayne and Michelle.



Abbey Redmond with her mother and brother.



Oscar Yeoh with his family.



Abbie Sargent with her family.



Kacie Gaule with her family.



# St Kilian's Community School



Adam Byrne with his mother, Lesley.



Ben Fox Plunkett with his Mother Lesley.



Kayleigh Howick and family.



Nicole Keogh with her mother, Daphne.



Jamie Carney with his parents Melinda and Stephen.



Amy Howick with her parents.

## 6th Year Poster



## Tullow Community School

The teachers and staff at Tullow Community School say goodbye to the 2020 Leaving Cert class.



WATCH >

### 'The Last Straw' KCLR Interview ahead of 'National Enterprise Awards Final 2020'



The four Transition Year Enterprise students from 'The Last Straw' were asked to do a follow up interview on the 'The Way It Is' show presented by Sue Nunn on KCLR 96fm on Tuesday the 26th May at 5 pm. They were interviewed ahead of representing County Carlow at the 'National Enterprise Awards Final 2020'

*We realise that reuse is better than recycle and as a result we are providing stainless steel reusable straws in different shapes, colours and sizes. We want to put an end to plastic straws and this is a better alternative than the paper straws. This is 'The Last Straw' you will ever need.*

READ MORE >

## Carndonagh Community School

### Sixth Year Care Packs Add a Little Sunshine...

The staff at CCS, coordinated by the Wellbeing Team, recently sent personalised Care Packs to every Sixth Year pupil. The essential contents included plenty of chocolate, coffee and lucky charms, along with some reassurance, which has been hard to source recently. All the staff want the school leavers of 2020 to know that no matter what's happening in the world around them, CCS has their back...

READ MORE >

### Creative Word Competition

Students were asked to "Spell out a word or phrase that describes how you are feeling, or offers inspiration to others at this time. Maybe it's a word that describes your time in lockdown. Use everyday objects that express the word or phrase the best."



## St. Columba's Comprehensive The Comp Class of 2020

Thanks to all who participated in our Leavers' Ceremony this evening and best of luck to all of our 6th Years.



WATCH >

### "Chaps at the Comp"

"Chaps at the Comp" is a Facebook Page featuring stories and info on what's happening in the Chaplaincy Department and any other craic in St. Columba's Comprehensive (The Comp) Glenties, Co. Donegal. There are a series of podcasts including one with Hugh McFadden, Donegal footballer and 6th class teacher in Killymard NS where they discuss some of the challenges involved in transitioning from primary to post primary school. Also in the podcast there is a discussion on transitioning out of post primary.

LISTEN >

## St. Louis Community School

### Ryan Tubridy's message to 6th year students



WATCH >

# Blackwater Community School Graduation 2020



To the class of 2020, you will be one we will never forget. Well done on all of your hard work in your time at BCS. Best of luck in all your future endeavours.

*I hope your dreams take you...  
To the corners of your smiles,  
To the highest of your hopes,  
To the windows of your opportunities,  
And to the most special places your heart has ever known.*



@HartstownCS

Class of 2020 – our first online graduation for 6th year students of Hartstown Community School. Memories of their school days, words from their teachers, special guests. The Leaving Cert that never was... Well done and thanks to all students and teachers for contributing and for all the special messages to our 6th year students for this virtual graduation. A special thanks to Lucia Ryan, John Bean, Fr. Dan Joe O'Mahony, Paul Mescal, Alan Hughes, Lorraine Keane, Ivan Yates, Michael Darragh MacAuley and Evan Comerford.

## Hartstown Community School



# Kildare Town Community School Leaving Certificate Covid Friendly Graduation Gig



Kildare Town Community School ran a Leaving Cert Covid friendly graduation in Kildare village shopping outlet car park on Wednesday 17th June.

Brenda Donohue from RTÉ Radio One Countrywide reported on a very personal, moving and unique graduation where the students received an unforgettable experience. It was like a mini electric picnic and the atmosphere was also electric.

It requires a vision to create an unforgettable experience and give Leaving Cert students the rite of passage they deserve. This was the coolest graduation ever which was coordinated by the Principal. But you can't do it on your own and help was at hand.

This event was community at the core with teachers and SNAs from the school, Kildare Village, Sergeant Gavin Dunphy and the team at Kildare Garda station, Cllr. Suzanne Doyle and over 40 volunteers who have worked for weeks in the run up to the event and who were here on the ground on the night making sure everything ran smoothly and was 100% Covid compliant. All of this was coordinated to the finest detail.



The key message on the night from the Principal Mr. John P Hayes was not to underestimate kindness, to learn from good mentors and that you can judge a person by how he/she treats others and especially how men treat women.

It was an outstanding job for the students, and the Principal made sure that there was a hugely positive ending to what seemed at one point to be the most difficult and disappointing end to the school year for this generation of Leaving Cert students.



# Kildare Town Community School

## COMMENTS FROM PARENTS

*Mr. Hayes,*

I would like to congratulate you on doing such a fantastic job for all of the students, having a drive-in graduation was such a great idea. They experienced a very unique and unforgettable experience on Wednesday night. As we all know it's so important to have closure of their school years, and graduation is an important rite of passage, and thanks to you, they not only got that rite, but they probably had the coolest graduation ever!!!

Also, I would like to thank you for all of the Zoom calls during lockdown, thanks to you, we were all kept as informed as it was possible to be under such extremely unusual and sometimes very stressful times. Thanks to your updates we could sort out fact from the fiction that all too often appears on social media.

You have done an outstanding job for the students, and made sure that there has been a hugely positive ending to what seemed at one point to be the most difficult and disappointing end to their school years. Thank you again.

*Hi John,*

The KTCS graduation event yesterday evening was very impressive. The attention to small details demonstrated that KTCS considered the event as seriously important and was motivated to make a success.

Please forward my thanks to your team who made your vision possible. Particularly the teachers who stood for so long, smiling and friendly throughout - as if they were doing the only thing they wanted to do at that moment (it was a long time to stand and it was not warm). The teachers who addressed myself and Hugh all the way through with words of congratulations (we were in the last group so moods could have been frayed). The attention to detail with the red carpet, balloons and recorded speeches (perfectly short and sweet).

Regards and Thank you  
Ann (Hugh McDonald's Mom)

*On a separate note, we appreciated the 10 rules of thumb and the nice to women point, the domestic violence increase as a result of lockdown relevance was not lost and it is so important that our sons see feminism positively and anything school can do to promote this in the youth is great.*

*Hi John,*

I just wanted to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to you and the team for the amount of effort and dedication that went into last night's graduation ceremony. You guys went above and beyond for the students and it was a fantastic night for all the atmosphere was brilliant and as I said to Ryan far beyond probably anything that would've been experienced in the normal run of things. It was a credit to you and your team and I think it made each and every student feel special, and given the stress they have had over the last few months I'm sure they all appreciate it greatly.

Well done to all involved it was a super super night what a great success!! I'm sure this will be talked about for years to come.

Kind regards  
Emma



*Hi Mr Hayes,*

I just wanted to express my heartfelt thanks for the beautiful Graduation that you organised this evening! Gosh what an emotional night, I'm still crying and we just thoroughly enjoyed it. I just wanted to say I am very proud of KTCS and really proud that my children have and are attending this school. What a remarkable bunch of staff you all are. Please pass on my heartfelt thanks to everyone involved this evening and have a lovely Summer.

Kindest regards  
Sarah Jane Burns (Josh Burn's Mammy)



## COMMENT FROM TEACHER

*Hi John,*

I wanted to put into words the huge success of the graduation ceremony you so perfectly organised but there are no human words that could adequately do that justice. So I will have to settle for words such as amazingly beautiful, so thoughtfully and perfectly planned down to the last detail, all inclusive...

I feel so happy and so proud to be part of the KTCS Community... to be part of a culture of positivity and one that exceeds all expectations, a culture that you are creating in our school which is evident for all those who have eyes to see. I'm so very grateful to be part of what you are creating.

Well done and congratulations on what you created this evening for the kids in our school. It was a proud and heartfelt moment for us all. I especially loved your words at the end of the night along with the slides... and you are so right... the most important thing in life is never to underestimate the power of kindness...



WATCH 

# Glenamaddy Community School

*You're off to great places, Today is your day. – Dr. Seuss*

Graduating from school can be both a joyful and a poignant time. ...

As the proverb says, it takes a village to raise a child. One of my wishes for you when you joined our school was that you'd be safe, healthy and happy. Being healthy and happy is the whole point of life. It involves doing the best you can with what you have.

In school we urge our students to find their unique talents and to act on them for good. The trick is to match who you are with your gifts. Finding out what you are good at and then, doing it for a living means you never have to rally work at all, so back yourself. A good education or training is the best investment you can make for yourself.

As your parents and teachers, we want what is best for you. Sometimes we look on you with a mixture of pride and concern. One of the reasons we do this is because we see so much of ourselves in you and because we have lived longer and know some of what is ahead of you.



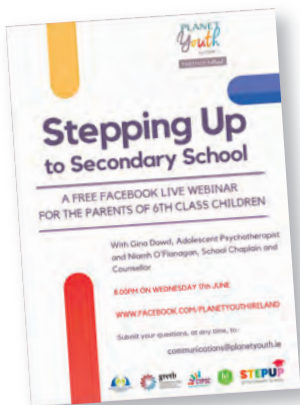
When we are young, we are inclined to take things for granted. Take nothing for granted! Always mind your family, your friends, your health and your living. You have so much going for you now, good looks, brains, confidence and optimism and you are blessed with family and friends to be there for you.

We hope that you, the Class of 2020, have happy memories of your

time in Glenamaddy Community School and that whatever happens, you remain true to yourself, your family, friends, faith and as always, I remind you, mind yourself and look out for one another.

God Bless!

[WATCH >](#)



## Stepping Up To Secondary School Webinar

This is an event that has been organised for the parents of 6th class children and it will give you some useful information on how to support your child over the summer and assist them in getting ready for their school transition. Niamh and Gina will be covering a lot of the frequently asked questions that parents often ask.

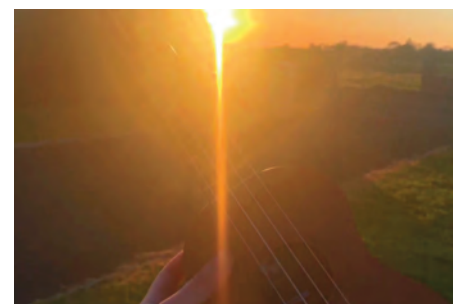
[READ MORE >](#)

## Congratulations to Emma Mahe (5th Year) on winning the Outstanding Contribution of a Student Award from WorldWide Global Schools

Students who win this award look at the world from different perspectives and have a genuine desire to learn more and be more aware and understanding of the impact of global injustices. They have a strong sense of their role as a global citizen, respect, value and celebrate diversity and are keen to tackle social injustices by creating awareness and taking action. We are very proud of Emma and all the work she has done for Global Citizenship Education in our school.



## Music Department life in lockdown - We'll be there for you



A little message from the music department as we go on our summer holidays. Looking forward to seeing you all in September.

*Stay safe and thanks to all the staff and students from the Music Department in Glenamaddy Community School for all their hard work in putting this together.*

[WATCH >](#)

# News and Events in our Schools

## Gallen Community School



@GallenSchool · Jun 8

Congratulations to our Junior Cycle class of 2020 on receiving their Junior Cycle School Based reports. As we all appreciate this has been a particularly difficult year for exam students across the country. We are very proud of all the hard work completed by this wonderful group.



@GallenSchool · Jun 11

Self portrait by Nicole Tighe a 5th year Art student in Gallen Community School. This piece was created by Nicole during lockdown using her artistic talent to her full potential. Nicole is an extremely gifted & creative Art student and this piece is certainly evidence of this.

## Ballinamore Community School Virtual Sports Day 2020

@BallinamoreCS · May 15

Big thanks to @denise\_stenson for planning our virtual sports day and to our past pupils who helped set challenges for the event @LeitrimSport @LeitrimGAA @LeitrimLGFA @colingriffin @RyanORourke16 @assortedfitness @RORfitness @HSEschoolsteam @accsirl



## Virtual Sports Day Amber Flag Award 2020

@BallinamoreCS · May 22

Congratulations to the Amber Flag Team for all their work & to everyone who got involved in the activities organised this year to promote positive mental health among our school community.



# Ballyhaunis Community School

## Inter-Cultural Celebrations

In Ballyhaunis Community School we have a long tradition of diversity in our school, something which we are very proud of and like to celebrate. On Thursday 5th of March BCS held its Intercultural Day. There are 33 different cultures in our school to date with 27 presenting on the day. Our motto for the day was to: 'Share our Similarities and Celebrate our Differences'. There was a carnival like atmosphere in the school as students shared their traditional foods, music, dance and language. The high point of the day was when a large number of students some in traditional dress, some in their national football jerseys joined together and danced with a real sense of unity in diversity. The students were joined by members of the Direct Provision Centre in Ballyhaunis who are facilitating a workshop in the school entitled 'stories of refuge stories of welcome.' The workshop is funded by Amnesty International. This special event was planned and coordinated by our enthusiastic Transition Years and their Development Education teacher Ms. Genny Murray. Thanks to Ms. Murray for all her hard work in preparation for the day.





# Ballyhaunis Community School

## Fundraising



Well done to all of our students for their fantastic fundraising initiatives during the past school year. Despite having to cancel a number of our annual fundraising events we still raised over €4,000 for local charities. Well done to everyone involved.

# Dunmore Community School

## BINJA'S from Dunmore Community School Win SEAI One Good Idea National Final



In such times of uncertainty, one thing is for sure: Dunmore Community School, Co. Galway is a progressive school and extremely environmentally conscious. Every year the SEAI runs a nationwide One Good Idea schools competition which aims to engage everyone on the important issues of Sustainable Energy and Climate Change. The SEAI encourages teams of students to create innovative and exciting awareness campaigns to inspire those around them to make lifestyle changes to save energy and reduce carbon emissions.

This year, a group of six 2nd Year students from Dunmore Community School entered the competition with their very creative idea of the BINJA's. Through field research, these active energy citizens calculated the amount of single use bottles in the school and the effect it was having globally on the environment - 'By the year 2050 there will be more plastic bottles in

the ocean than fish'. The direction of their campaign was clear - they would create an effective campaign around the 3 R's (Reduce, Refill, Recycle). The idea of the Binja's was born - warriors that fight in the battle against climate change by promoting refillable bottle use, reducing single use plastic and recycling the remainder. They encouraged their school and wider community to make small changes to have big impacts of improvement for the world. Promotion of their idea was vital. The students created an original and attention grabbing one minute film to promote their campaign, formulated the plot, costumes (from recyclable materials), drafted in actors from 1st and 2nd Year and produced it all with some fantastic editing. This film alone has a reach of over 2,000 views and growing. They purchased recycling bins for classrooms, gave information talks/workshops to classes, created and displayed

campaign posters and encouraged the use of their newly installed Versa Water filler throughout the school. All this work ensured their rightful place in the Regional Final in Limerick. Here the Binja's film was played on the big Omniplex screen and they presented their pitch discussing the importance of their campaign in today's world. The proactive Binja's won the Regional Final and progressed to the All-Irelands. School closures followed due to Covid-19 however the innovative SEAI programme organisers put huge effort in to run a Virtual National Final to celebrate all the schools hard work. Although not the National final anticipated, through a video classroom team meeting the students and teachers watched the final together with the incredible outcome of the Binja's winning the All-Ireland! This was the school's first time to enter and a remarkable achievement to come 1st place out of 180 entries from all over the country. Dunmore Community School is extremely proud of the work and achievement of The Binja's - Mikey Keadin, Oisín Cloonan, Ruairi Walkin, Jamie Regan, Philip Donnellan and Tomás Kennedy. Remember 'Live the Binja's way - Reduce Refill Recycle'.

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**Binja's Win the National SEAI One Good Idea Competition**

### Green-Schools Global Citizenship School of the Year Awards 2020



The 2019/2020 academic year marks the 23rd year of the Green-Schools programme in Ireland. Despite the temporary closure of schools in March, the dedication of [dunmorecs.ie](http://dunmorecs.ie)

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### Junior Entrepreneur Competition

#### What about me? Siblings of children with special needs

TY students from Dunmore Community School develop a booklet aimed at the siblings of those with special needs.

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## Recent Relevant DES Circular Letters

Circular No.	Summary
CL 39/20	Calculated Grades Aides 2020 - Assistance for schools during the Calculated Grades Model
CL 37/20	Implementation of Calculated Grades Model For Leaving Certificate 2020 - Guide for Schools on Providing Estimated Percentage Marks and Class Rank Orderings
CL 36/20	Recruitment of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) - Supplementary Assignment Arrangements for the 2020/2021 school year
CL 35/20	Prescribed Material for the Junior Cycle Examination in 2022 and Leaving Certificate Examination in 2022
CL 34/20	Revision of Application of Additional Increments awarded in Relation to New Entrants Under the Public Services Stability Agreement 2018-2020
CL 33/20	Revision of 2011 Entrant Teacher Salaries with Effect from 1 March 2020 - Application of Additional Increments
CL 32/20	Grant Scheme for ICT Infrastructure - 2019/2020 School Year €10m Funding to issue to Primary and Post-primary Schools
CL 31/20	Grant Scheme for ICT Infrastructure - 2019/2020 School Year
CL 30/20	Special Needs Assistant Allocations for the 2020/21 School Year for Mainstream Classes in Primary and Post Primary Schools
CL 29/20	Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Teachers working with Students with Special Educational Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorder)

## Urgent: Return your Trócaire box donation



Each year, schools all over Ireland take part in Trócaire's Lenten Appeal to bring aid and support to almost three million of the world's poorest people.

The efforts of children, parents and teachers raise vital funds for Trócaire's life-saving work.

This year, schools closures have meant that the usual fundraisers have not taken place. It also means people haven't been able to return their Trócaire boxes.

This means that Trócaire's Lenten Appeal is up to 60% down. That will have a devastating impact on the 3 million people the charity supports overseas, particularly as the charity battles the spread of Covid-19 in 20 of the world's poorest countries.

That is why Trócaire is urgently asking people who have a Trócaire box at home but who haven't been able to return it to count what it in it and donate at [trocaire.org](http://trocaire.org) or by phoning 1850 408 408 (RoI) or 0800 912 1200 (NI).

Make your box count this year by making sure Trócaire can continue its life-saving work.